
A Brazilian TV presenter has been accused of ordering killings to get rid of drug trafficking rivals and to boost his ratings. Wallace Souza, a state legislator, says the claims are an attempt by political rivals to smear him. From Sao Paulo Gary Duffy reports:

If what the police say is true then this is the TV show that not only reported crime but was actually **behind it as well**. For the authorities believe that state legislator and presenter Wallace Souza **commissioned** at least five murders in order to get rid of drug trafficking rivals and **to boost his programme ratings**. They also say he wanted to prove his claims that the region he represented in the state of Amazonas was **plagued with** crime. A local police chief told the Associated Press that **the order to execute** always came from the presenter and his son, and that TV crews were alerted to get to the scene of the crime first. State Security Secretary Francisco Cavalcanti says the truth has now become clear.

Manaus Public Security Secretary, Francisco Cavalcanti: "On several occasions they **fabricated** the facts, they **fabricated** news."

Wallace Souza faces a variety of charges including drug trafficking and weapons possession but remains free because for the moment **his political role gives him immunity**. His son Rafael meanwhile has been arrested on charges of murder, drug trafficking and illegally possessing guns.

Lawyers for Mr Souza, a former policeman who **was expelled from the force**, say the accusations are an attempt to **smear** him and that there is **not one piece of material proof** to back the police claims.

Gary Duffy, BBC News, Brazil

Vocabulary and definitions

behind it as well	also responsible for it (here, crime)
commissioned	told or ordered someone to do something and paid for it
to boost his programme ratings	to increase his programme's popularity, to get more people to watch it
plagued with	very badly affected by something bad (here, crime)
the order to execute	the command to do something (here, to kill)
fabricated	made up, invented or said things that weren't true
his political role gives him immunity	because he's a political officer (a state legislator) he can't be charged with a crime
expelled from the force	made to, or forced to leave his job in the police department (or police force)
smear	accuse someone of something which is unpleasant, unreasonable or unlikely to be true and which is made publicly with the intention of harming that person's reputation
not one piece of material proof	no solid evidence, evidence that you can see or touch

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